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DEPT DELIVER TO EUR/CE AT OOB, MAY 21  
USVIENNA FOR MBFR AND UNVIE

E.O. 12356: N/A

TEXT

TAGS: PREL, AU  
SUBJECT: AUSTRIA--WALDHEIM: DEBATE CONTINUES

1. (LOU) SUMMARY: ALONGSIDE EXTENSIVE ATTENTION TO VRANITZKY'S MEETINGS IN WASHINGTON (SEPTEL), THE AUSTRIAN MEDIA CONTINUE WIDE COVERAGE OF OTHER ASPECTS OF THE WALDHEIM AFFAIR:

--IN CONTRAST TO VRANITZKY'S CAREFUL APPROACH AND HIS EMPHASIS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF U.S.-AUSTRIAN RELATIONS,

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FOREIGN MINISTER AND PEOPLE'S PARTY (OVP) LEADER MOCK HAS AGAIN SPOKEN OUT SHARPLY, REJECTING THE BASIS OF THE U.S. DECISION AND CALLING LAST WEEK'S VISIT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TEAM "AN OUTRAGE." ALTHOUGH MOCK CLAIMS THE COALITION "CAN TAKE THE STRAIN," HIS STATEMENTS ACTUALLY SERVE TO RECERTIFY HIS PARTY'S UNCOMPROMISING SUPPORT FOR WALDHEIM.

--WALDHEIM'S EDITORIAL DEFENDERS ALSO CONTINUE TO BLAST THE U.S.

-- LOOKING AT THE WHOLE SPECTRUM OF AUSTRIAN OPINION AFTER WALDHEIM'S MAY 19 TV ADDRESS, THE REACTION IS BEING WIDELY CHARACTERIZED AS NO BETTER THAN "MIXED."

--FOLLOWING A SECOND TASS ATTACK ALLEGING U.S. "ZIONIST CIRCLES" WERE BEHIND THE WALDHEIM DECISION, AS WELL AS OTHER FRIENDLY OVERTURES DIRECTED AT VIENNA FROM WARSAW PACT CAPITALS, A COMMENTARY AGAIN TODAY EXPRESSED FEARS THAT AN ISOLATED AUSTRIA MAY BE PUSHED EASTWARDS. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) EMPHASIZING THE UNBROKEN, CONTINUING SUPPORT OF THE OVP FOR WALDHEIM, FM ALOIS MOCK TODAY GAVE HIS PERSONAL STAMP OF APPROVAL TO PREVIOUSLY-EXPRESSED OVP "APPRECIATION" FOR WALDHEIM'S SPEECH. IN AN INTERVIEW GIVEN TO "DIE PRESSE", MOCK CALLED THE SPEECH "A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION" WHICH HAD CLEARED UP MANY OF WALDHEIM'S PREVIOUS STATEMENTS. IN MOCK'S VIEW, WALDHEIM HAD NOW MADE HIS FINAL CONTRIBUTION TO SETTLING THE ISSUE. MOCK STRESSED THAT THE GOA WOULD NOT CALL ON THE PRESIDENT TO RESIGN, SINCE AUSTRIA WAS "NOT GOING TO DESTROY ITS OWN SELF-CONFIDENCE". WITH REMARKABLE CANDOR MOCK EXPRESSED HIS ANGER OVER THE MAY 15 MEETING WITH U.S. DOJ OFFICIALS IN VIENNA. CLAIMING THAT THE U.S. HAD PROGRESSIVELY RETREATED FROM PROMISES TO PRESENT DOCUMENTS, MOCK CALLED THE ACTUAL PERFORMANCE OF THE U.S., I.E. THE COMPLETE FAILURE TO FURNISH DOCUMENTS OR PROOF, "OUTRAGEOUS". "ALL OVER THE WORLD, THEY (THE U.S.) HAVE REFERRED TO AUSTRIA AS A COUNTRY OF NAZIS AND WAR CRIMINALS", MOCK TOLD THE PAPER. CITING THE THREE RESOLUTIONS (GOA, PARLIAMENT, AND CABINET) IN WHICH THE GOA HAD COME TO THE DEFENSE OF THE PRESIDENT, MOCK SAID THERE HAD NOW BEEN A CLEAR ILLUSTRATION THAT THE COALITION COULD "TAKE THE STRAIN".

3. (U) TRADITIONALLY PRO-WALDHEIM PAPERS CONTINUE TO ATTACK THE U.S. FOR "HYPOCRISY". AN EDITORIAL IN THE MASS TABLOID "KRONENZEITUNG" TODAY MEASURED WASHINGTON'S WATCH-LIST DECISION AGAINST "AMERICA'S WARM WELCOME" FOR ACCUSED WAR CRIMINAL **KLAUS BARBIE** AND FOR SS MEMBER WERNHER VON BRAUN. CLAIMING THAT THE U.S. TEAM HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO PRODUCE ANY HARD EVIDENCE AGAINST WALDHEIM, THE ARTICLE WENT ON TO CHARGE THAT THE U.S. HAD COVETED THOSE "ESSENTIAL PARTS OF THE NAZI KILLING MACHINE" IT CONSIDERED "USEFUL", WHILE UNJUSTLY STIGMATIZING THE AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT.

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4. (U) SUMMING UP THE AUSTRIAN DOMESTIC VERDICT ON WALDHEIM'S SPEECH OF THE DAY BEFORE, LAST NIGHT'S NATIONAL TV NEWS CHARACTERIZED THE REACTION AS "MIXED". A MAJORITY OF POLITICAL COMMENTATORS HAVE EMBRACED WALDHEIM'S "CANDID WORDS" WITH "RELIEF". ON THE PART OF HIS SUPPORTERS, IT HAS LED TO THE EXPECTATION THAT "RECONCILIATION" WITH WALDHEIM'S CRITICS IS NOW A REALISTIC PROSPECT. MANY HAVE STRESSED WHAT IS BEING CALLED WALDHEIM'S SELF-CRITICAL SOUL-SEARCHING ON THE C O N F I D E N T I A L

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SUBJECT OF HIS OWN AND AUSTRIA'S PAST. OTHERS ARE AGAIN SAYING THAT WALDHEIM'S FINE WORDS HAVE COME A YEAR TOO LATE AND THAT MUCH REMAINED TO BE DONE BEFORE AUSTRIA CAN BE SAID TO HAVE DEALT CONVINCINGLY WITH ITS PAST. THE SKEPTICISM OF THE EFFICACY OF WALDHEIM'S STATEMENT, VOICED BY A NUMBER OF SPO, FPO AND GREEN PARTY LEADERS, HAS CONTRIBUTED TO A GROWING SENSE OF APPREHENSION ON THE PART OF SOME SEGMENTS OF THE PUBLIC THAT THE WALDHEIM AFFAIR WILL CONTINUE ITS DISRUPTIVE EFFECT ON THE COUNTRY FOR SOME TIME TO COME.

4. ANOTHER "TASS" ITEM - THE SECOND ON THE SUBJECT OF WALDHEIM IN RECENT WEEKS - POINTS TO ZIONIST CIRCLES IN THE U.S. AND THEIR DESIRE TO TAKE REVENGE ON WALDHEIM FOR HIS MIDDLE EAST POLICY AS BEING BEHIND THE WATCH-LIST DECISION. THIS "TASS" STATEMENT HAS FEATURED PROMINENTLY ON AUSTRIAN RADIO. IT HAS ALSO BEEN THE OCCASION FOR A COMMENTARY WHICH SAYS THAT, IF WASHINGTON WANTS TO REMAIN INSENSITIVE AND INFLEXIBLE IN ITS STAND AGAINST WALDHEIM, THEN IT MUST AT LEAST "BE ALARMED" AT THE "CHARM OFFENSIVE" BEING DIRECTED AT AUSTRIA BY THE EAST.

5. (LOU) COMMENT: MOCK'S STATEMENTS STRIKE US AS TODAY'S MOST SIGNIFICANT DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE WALDHEIM DISCUSSION. WHILE THE CHANCELLOR, IN WASHINGTON, POINTEDLY DISTANCES HIMSELF FROM THE QUESTION OF WALDHEIM'S GUILT OR INNOCENCE, COALITION PARTNER MOCK, JUST AS POINTEDLY, TAKES AN OPPOSITE TACK AT HOME. MOCK HAMMERS AWAY AT FOUL PLAY ON THE AMERICAN SIDE, CLAIMS THE WALDHEIM SPEECH HAS SETTLED THE MATTER AS FAR AS HE IS CONCERNED, AND PREDICTS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT, NOW OR LATER, ASK THE PRESIDENT TO STEP DOWN. WHILE "DIE PRESSE'S" HEADLINE CITES MOCK AS SAYING, "THE COALITION CAN TAKE IT," BEHIND THE ARTICLE'S OSTENSIBLE LEAD WE CAN SEE A CLEAR DRAWING OF THE LINES BETWEEN THE COALITION PARTNERS. BLOCH

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Page 4